DIGITAL INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Digital India stands for transforming India into a digitally empowered society and future knowledge economy. Digital India programme is e-revolution which ensures that government services are made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and internet connectivity.

The motto of digital India programme "POWER to EMPOWER" is itself enlightening the vision of the programme that is to take nation forward digitally, economically, and efficiently. It also aims to connect Grampanchayat by Broadband internet, promote E-Governance and transform India into a connected knowledge economy. This paper attempts to highlight different opportunities for the people and different challenges faced by Digital India programme.

Keywords: Digital India, Online Infrastructure

DATA COLLECTION

The paper is based on the secondary data and the information is retrieved from the internet via journals, newspapers and research papers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

- To study the concept of digital India programme
- To study the challenges faced by digital India programme in its implementation
- To study the opportunities of the programme for the people

INTRODUCTION

A Programme DIGITAL INDIA has the aim to prepare India for a knowledge future. The Digital India programme pulls together many existing schemes which would be re-structured and re-focused wherever required. The Digital India programme is a flagship programme of the government of India. It was launched on 1 July 2015 having a vision of converting India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Its objective is to ensure that government services are made available to citizens electronically without the use of paperwork. It also includes plan to connect rural areas with high speed internet networks. Itis one of the biggest step by government of India to motivate the citizens of the country and connect Indian economy to knowledge savvy world.

VISION AREAS OF DIGITAL INDIA

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Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen → Governance and Services on Demand → Digital Empowerment of Citizens

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NINE PILLARS OF DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME

1. **Broadband Highways:** The aim is to cover 25000 village panchayats under National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN) by December 2016.Nationwide internet infrastructure (NII) would integrate the network and cloud infrastructure in the country and its main aim is to provide high speed connectivity and cloud platform to various departments of government up to the panchayat level.

2. **Universalaccesstophones:** Mobile phone is the need of present time. Under this pillar mobile connectivity is provided to uncovered areas. Mobile phone connectivity is being provided to42, 300 villages in next 4 years.

3. **Public internet access programme**: Under this programme the post offices becomes multi service centres.

4. **E-governance reforming government through technology:** This pillar includes Government business process Re-engineering using IT to improve transaction and Electronic databases in which all data bases and information to be effective not manual.

5. **E-kranti- electronic delivery of services**: E-Kranti will include technology for education, technology for health, technology for planning, technology for farmers, technology for security, technology for financial inclusion and technology for justice.

6. **Information for all:** it will include online hosting of information & document. Government pro-actively engages through social media and web based platform to inform citizens about MyGov.in and 2 way communications between citizens and government and online messaging to citizens on special occasions/programmes.

7. **Electronic manufacturing target net zero import:** Under this pillar the focus areas are Fabs, Fab-less design, set-top boxes,Vsats, mobiles, consumers and medical, electronics, smart energy meters, smart cards, micro –ATM.

8. **IT for jobs:** It will include train people in smaller towns and villages for IT sector jobs, train service delivery agents to run viable business delivery IT services. It will include telecom service providers also to train work force to cater to their own needs.

9. **Early harvest programmes:** IT platform for messages, Government greetings to be E-greetings and Biometric attendance.

INITIATIVES UNDER DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME:

Some of the facilities provided under the initiative of Digital India are as follows:

- ✓ **Digi Locker**: Digital Locker facility helps citizens to digitally store their significant documents like PAN card, passport, mark sheets and degree certificates. Digital Locker offers secured access to Government issued documents. It uses authenticity services provided by Aadhaar. Its target is to eliminate the use of physical documents and allow the sharing of verified electronic documents throughout all the government agencies. Citizen, Issuer and requester are the three key Stakeholders of Digi Locker Facility.

- ✓ **Attendance.gov.in:** Attendance.gov.in is a website, launched by PM NarendraModi to keep a record of the attendance of Government employees on a real-time basis. This initiative has started with implementation of a common Biometric Attendance System (BAS) in the central government offices located in Delhi.

- ✓ **MyGov.in**: MyGov.in is a platform to share inputs and ideas on matters of policy and governance. Digital India is a platform for Indian Citizens engagement in governance, through a 3D "Discuss", "Do" and "Disseminate" approach.

- ✓ **SBM Mobile app:** Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Mobile app is being used by people and Government organizations for achieving the goals of Swachh Bharat Mission.

- ✓ **E-Hospital:** The e-Hospital application provides important services such as online registration, payment of fees and appointment, online diagnostic reports, enquiring availability of blood online etc.

- ✓ **National Scholarship Portal:** National Scholarship Portal is a one-step solution for end to end scholarship process right from submission of student application, verification, sanction and disbursal to end beneficiary provided by the Government of India.

- ✓ **E-Sign framework:** E-Sign framework allows citizens to digitally sign a document online using Aadhaar authentication.

OPPORTUNITIES OF DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME

Though Digital India programme has faced many challenges in its implementation but it has some prospects which are mentioned below –

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: It would bring in public accountability through mandated delivery of Government services electronically.

END OF CORRUPTION: Digital India programme will put an end to corruption system which becomes the main feature of the country.

REDUCTION OF PAPER WORK: Digital India programme aims to reduce paper work which will help to save trees & protect environment.

TRANSPARENCY: A Project under Digital India, National scholarship portal will finish the scholarship process of application submission, verification, sanction and disbursal tasks earlier required to get the scholarships.

BENEFICIAL FOR VILLAGERS: It benefits people of India in every village in terms of knowledge improve by 5 using internet in day to day life.

BANK ACCOUNT: Each person will be having bank account.

CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL INDIA

The Digital India Initiative is an ambitious project of the government .Still there is so many challenges for the completion of the project. Some of them are described as follows-

DIVERSIFIED CULTURE: India is a diversified country in terms of culture. Each state has its own specific language, customs, food habits, laws and traditions. Digital India programe aims to integrate the whole country digitally. Complete integration that is integration of technology and language is one of the main challenges the mission would face in its implementation.

DIFFERENT INTERNAL PROTOCOLS : There are different internet protocols in different states depending on what kind of hardware and software they implement and chances are that might lead to connectivity glitches. Hence there must be some sort of a directive to standardize all the software protocols.

LACK OF COORDINATION AMONG DEPARTMENTS: Digital India aims to transform the country into a digitally empowered knowledge economy. It is not an easy task. It needs coordination and cooperation of all the government Departments. Without the smooth teamwork between the departments the mission would never be implemented to its full strength.

POVERTY AND ILLITERACY: Public internet access is one of the pillars of Digital India programme. But in India, poverty and illiteracy stands as major obstacles in internet access. High illiteracy rate act as a major road block in expanding the reach of internet.

LACK OF CYBER SECURITY: We live in a world where internet and cyber-crime are inseparable enemies. The entire architecture should be designed in such a way that there is proper authentication done of all the documents put online by citizens and it is available to the right users at any time they want with the right authentication. In order to ensure the cyber security the country should have privacy norms.

INFRASTRUCTURE: National Optical fiber network ensures broadband reaches in every nook and corner of the country. But to reach broadband connection country wide is not an easy task.

TIME OVERRUN: Project has been delayed several times and suffering two years . So it also delayed other projects. Timely completion of the projects is most important for the success of any project.

SUGGESTIONS

The Success of Digital India cannot be achieved at its own. There is need of changing the Policies to make the dream come into real picture. Few of the suggestions are:

> ➢ Digital literacy is first step in empowering citizens. People should know how to secure their online data.

➢ To make this programme successful, a massive awareness programme has to be conducted. There is pressing need to educate and inform the citizens, especially in rural and remote areas, about the benefits of internet services to increase the growth of internet usage.

➢ Digital divide needs to be addressed.

➢ Manufacturing content is not government's strength. This mission needs content and service partnerships with telecom companies and other firms.

➢ Private sector should be encouraged for development of last mile infrastructure in rural and remote areas. To encourage private sector, there must be favorable taxation policies, quicker clearance of projects.

➢ The success of digital India project depends upon maximum connectivity with minimum cyber security risks. For this we need a strong anti- cyber-crime team which maintains the database and protects it round the clock.

➢ To improve skill in cyber security, we need to introduce cyber security course at graduate level and encourage international certification bodies to introduce various skill based cyber security courses.

➢ There is need for effective participation of various departments and demanding commitment and efforts. Various policies in different areas should support this goal.

➢ For successful implementation, there must be amendments in various legislations that have for long hindered the growth of technology in India.

CONCLUSION

Digital India is ambitious programme of the government having the objective of taking nation forward digitally and economically. This initiative is a refreshing move and has reduced the working for hours of technological sector. The Government of India has a hope that Digital India Programme will lead to achievements of Growth on multiple fronts. Although, the programme is facing many problems but the persistent attention and execution will convert the vision into reality for sure. To strengthen the programme we should always be mentally prepared and ready to face the challenges in implementing the programme at the ground level.

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